

Underwater Archaeology

Slave ships and the slave trade

Dr Jane Webster



TODAY'S OBJECTIVES

1. To understand what underwater archaeology is
2. To look at artefacts recovered from the *Henrietta Marie*
3. To understand how slave shipwrecks can help with our study of the transatlantic slave trade
4. To explore what the voyage on a slave ship (the 'middle passage') was like for captives





The slave trade 'triangle': Which three continents did the slave ship visit?

The Transatlantic Slave Trade



- 12.5 million people carried away from Africa
- 1.8 million people died on 'Middle Passage' (the journey from Africa to the Americas)
- Britain played a really BIG part in the slave trade
- **3.2m Africans** were carried on British ships— mostly to the Caribbean
- Britain WORLD LEADER of the slave trade 1750-1807



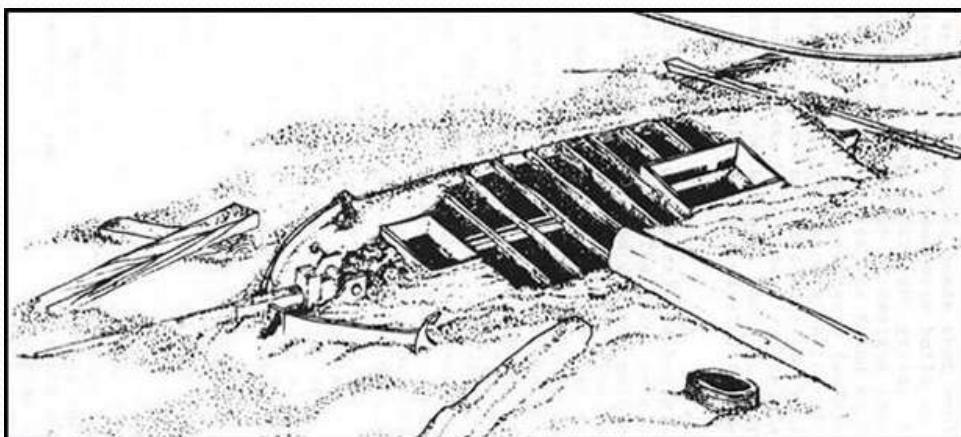
This video about the French Slave ship *Aurore* will help you to understand the key features of ships used in the slave trade
<https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/ship>



- **Almost 1000 slave ships were wrecked at sea**
- **So there are lots of wrecks to find....**
- **BUT underwater archaeology is very expensive to do**
- **Only a few slave ships have been found and studied by underwater archaeologists**



Underwater archaeology





<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYaOUO46zVY>

A short clip about underwater archaeology



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fgzGX-pPYiM>

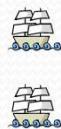
Another short clip about underwater archaeology



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bjqIOGp3yGY>

This is not a slave ship, but the video will give you a really good sense of what it's like being an underwater archaeologist.

THE HENRIETTA MARIE



Sank 35 miles off Key West, Florida in 1700

Commemorating the *Henrietta Marie*:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f2fYUoSJybc>



"The story ends in 1700 for this particular ship, but the story of what the ship represented continues today," he says. "The importance of the *Henrietta Marie* is that she is an essential part of recovering the black experience - symbolically, metaphorically and in reality." Dr Colin Palmer



ARCHAEOLOGY SCHOOLS



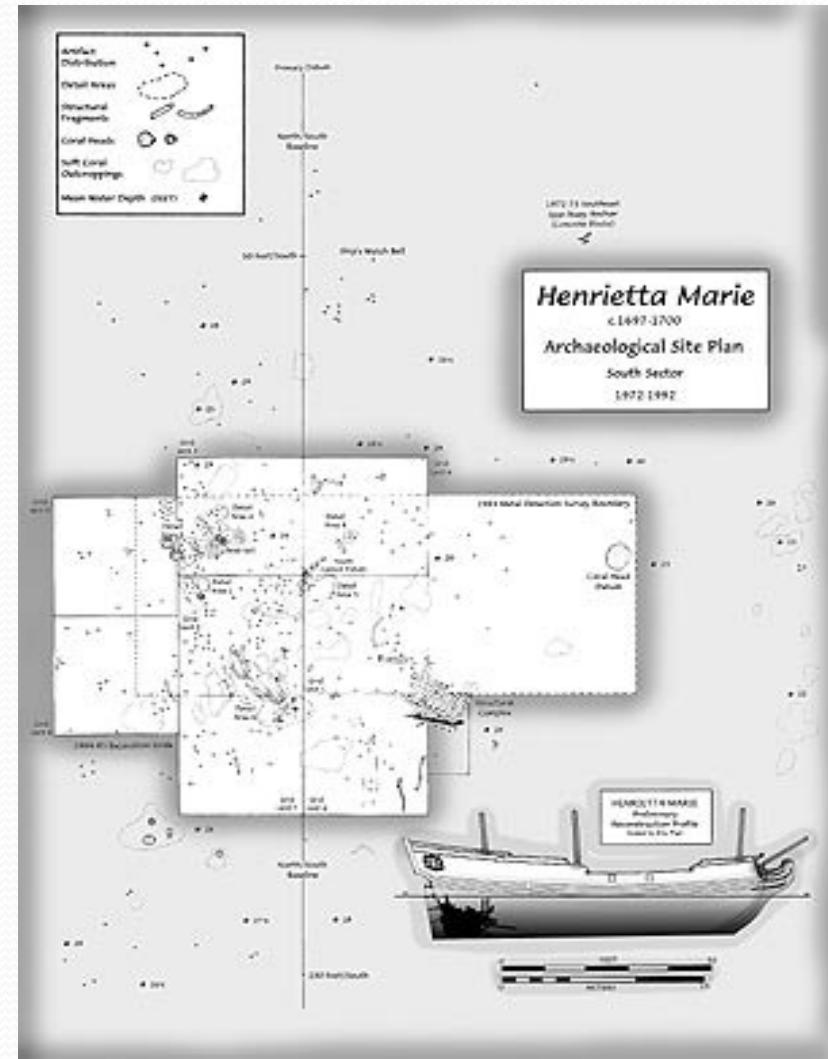
Discovery of the *Henrietta Marie*

- 1972-3 Wreck found by a company looking for wrecks of Spanish **treasure ships** in the Caribbean sea
- In 1983 archaeologist David Moore identified the wreck – because the bell was found, with the ship's name on it
- <http://www.wvculture.org/museum/Marie/henrietta.pdf>

(Note for teachers/parents - this link takes you to an information pack containing some good pupil tasks)



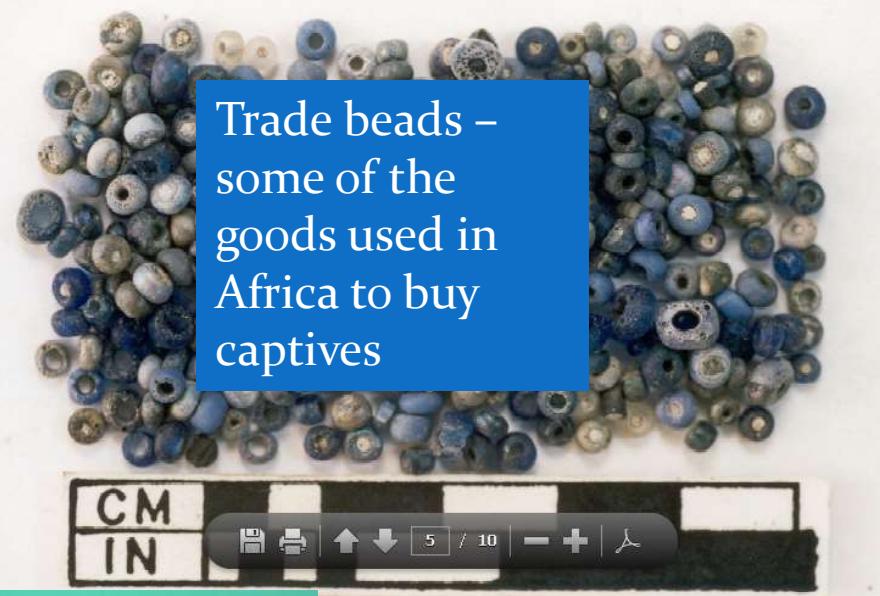
- ***Henrietta Marie* is the only identified British slave ship wreck**
- This is the dive plan – a plan showing where all the parts of the wreck were scattered on the seabed



Finds from the
wreck - what are
they?



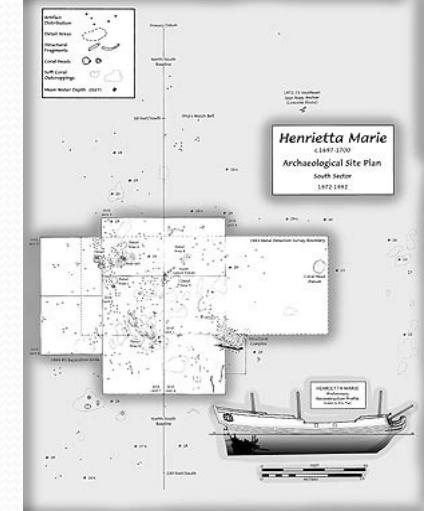
Finds from the wreck - what are they?



Trade beads - some of the goods used in Africa to buy captives



What's left of the ship's timbers

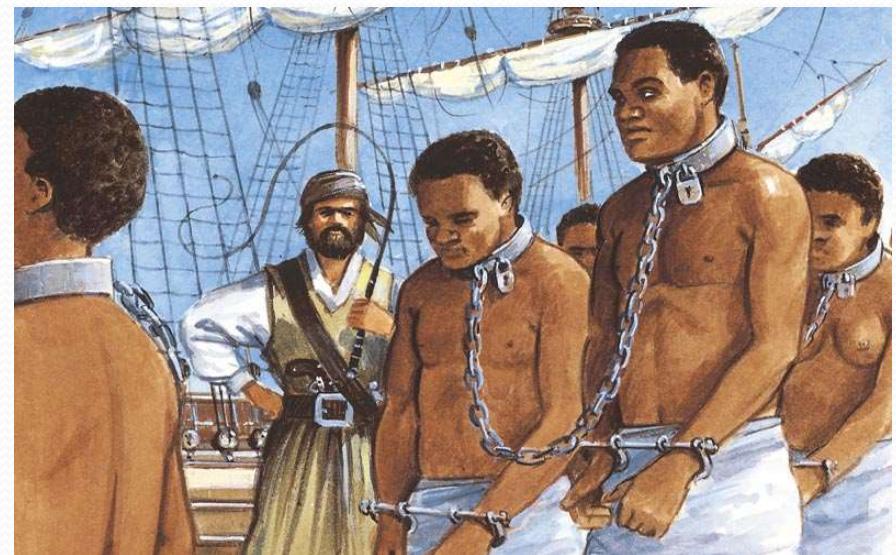
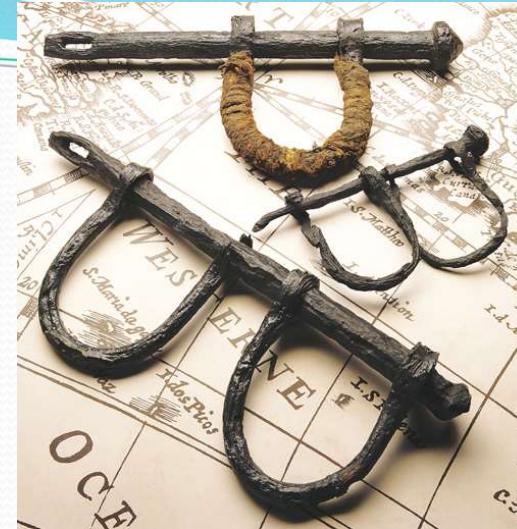




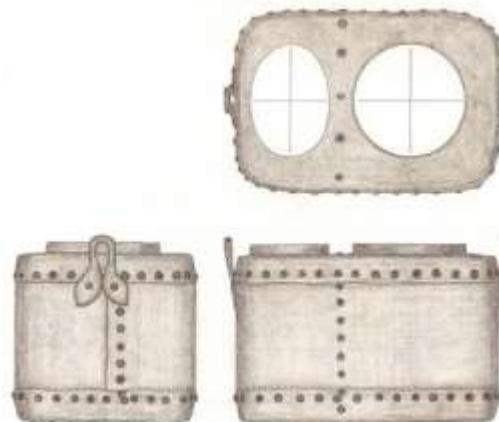
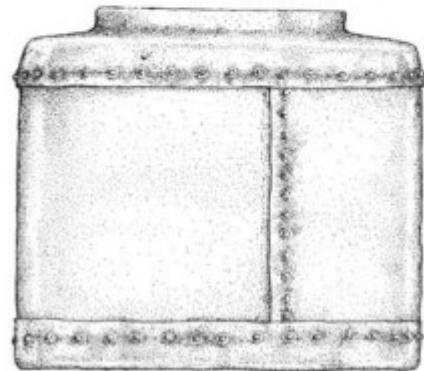
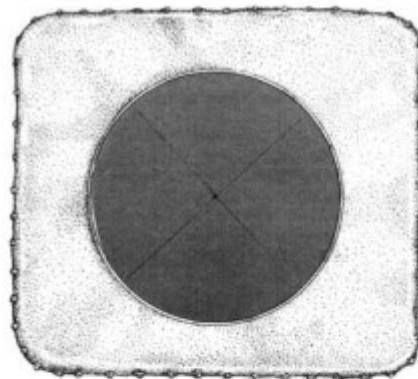
What are these objects?



- **Bilboes (double shackles) –** parts from 80 found -enough to hold more than 160 people
- How they work: two U-shaped shackles fit over the ankles or wrists of the slaves
- Various sizes – different workshops made them
- Some had cord around them – maybe to prevent chaffing when worn for a long time
- Some were small enough for children



WHAT MIGHT THESE HAVE BEEN USED FOR?



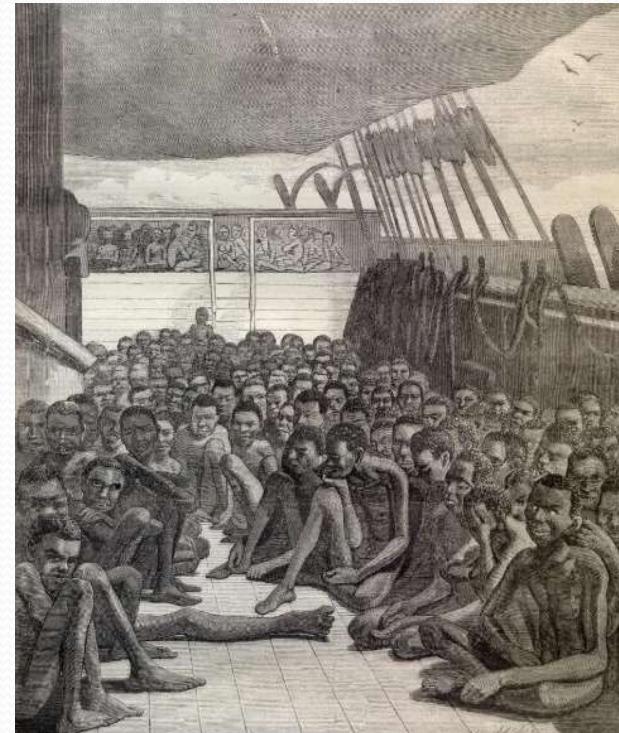
Newcastle
University

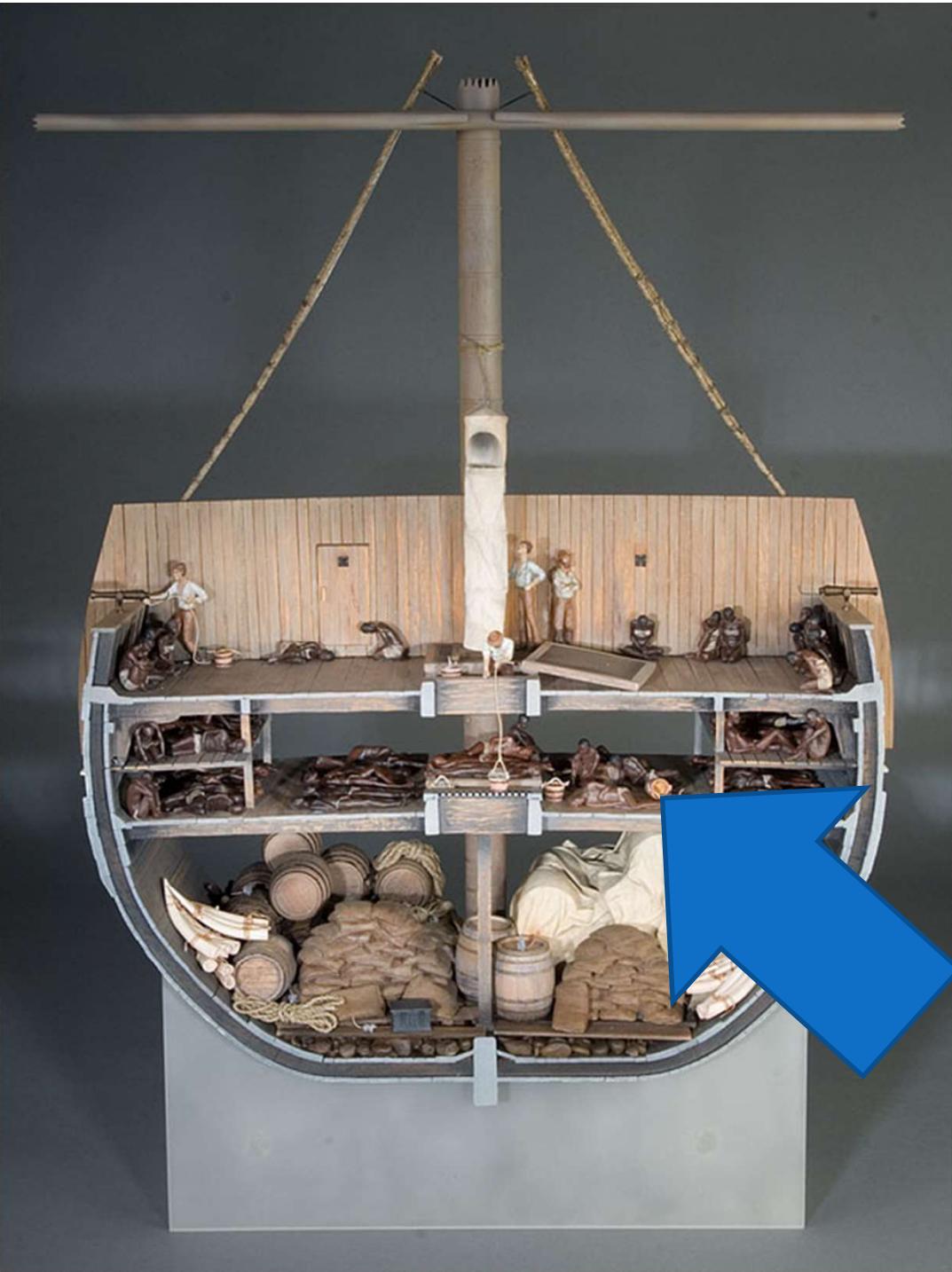
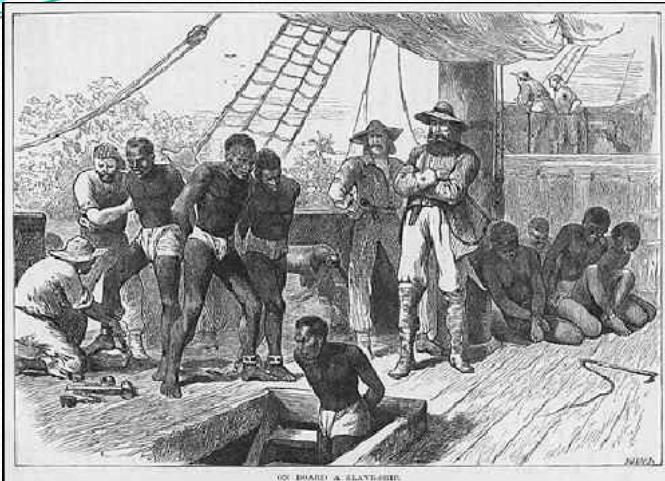
ARCHAEOLOGY SCHOOLS



COOKING CAULDRONS

- 2 copper cauldrons
- Used as cooking vessels aboard the ship
- Differences between the cauldrons shows each carried to accommodate for the differences in people on board
- Holds large amount of food for 200+ Africans
- Small cauldron probably used for the crew

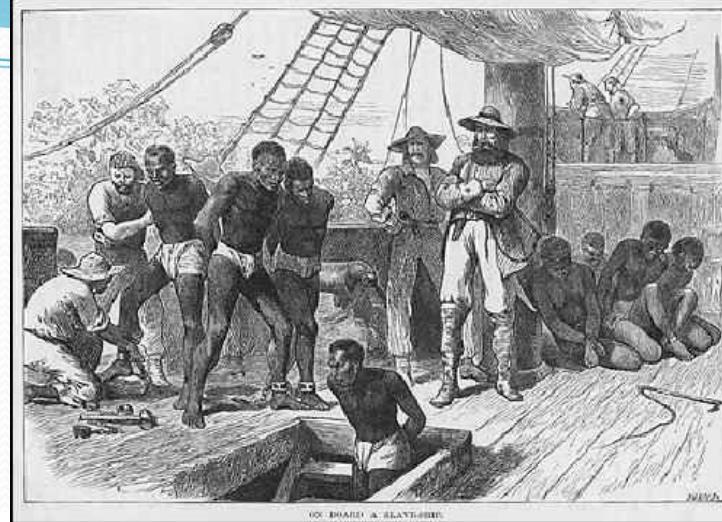




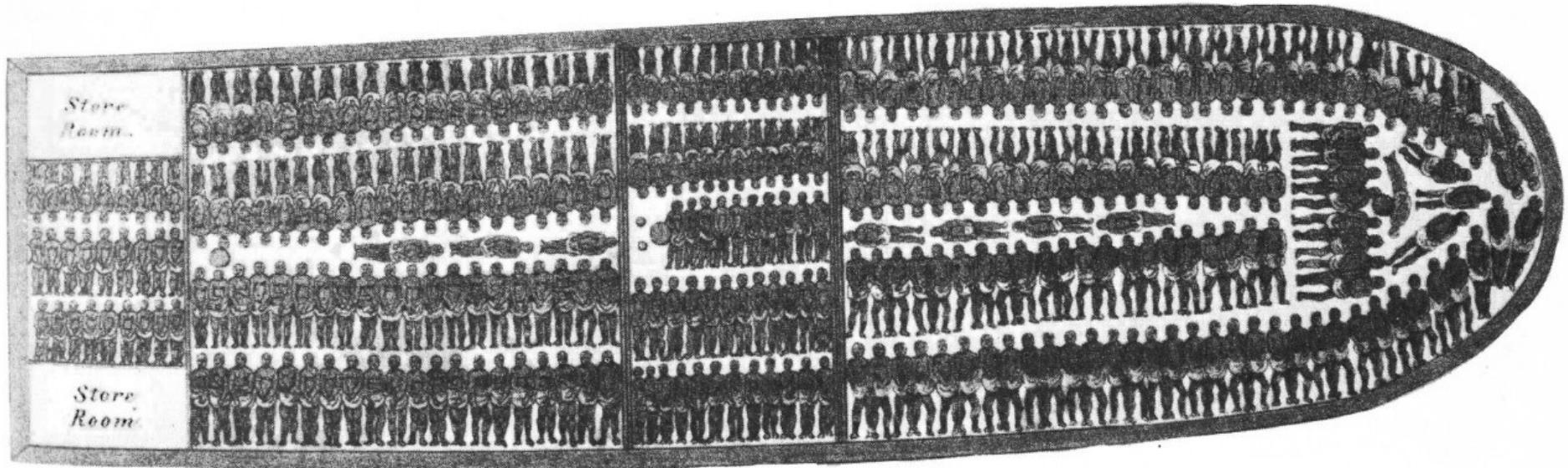
The 'slave deck':

- the space where captives spent most of the voyage

Where are the bathrooms?

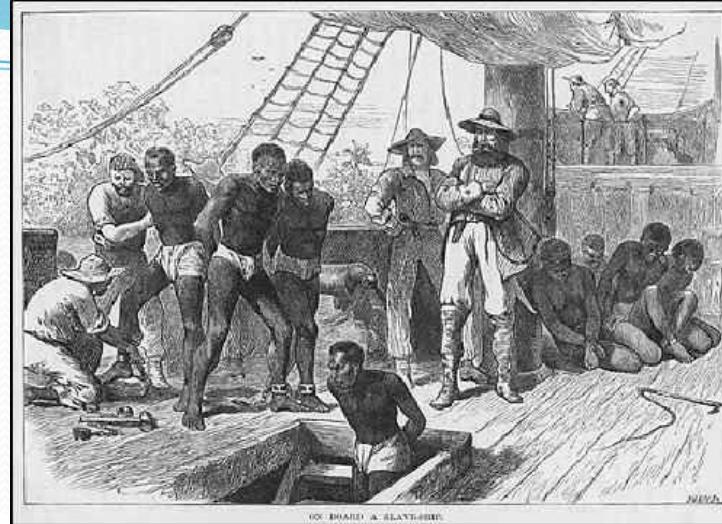


What did people sleep on?

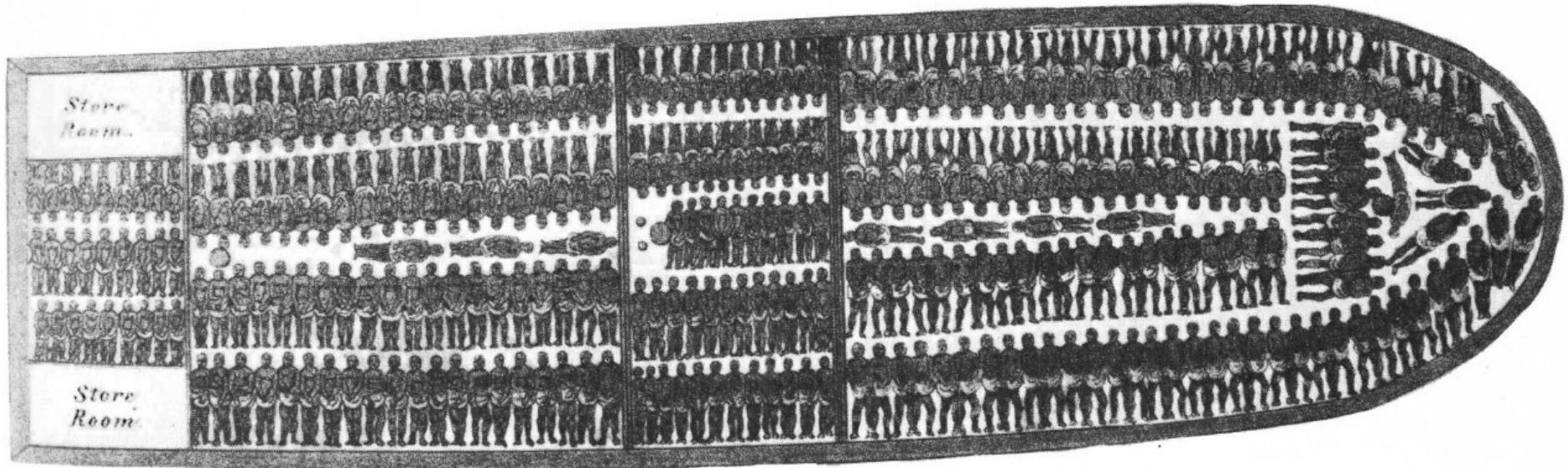


The captives spent every night (and a lot of the day) on the 'slave deck'. Conditions down there were very crowded, very hot, and filthy

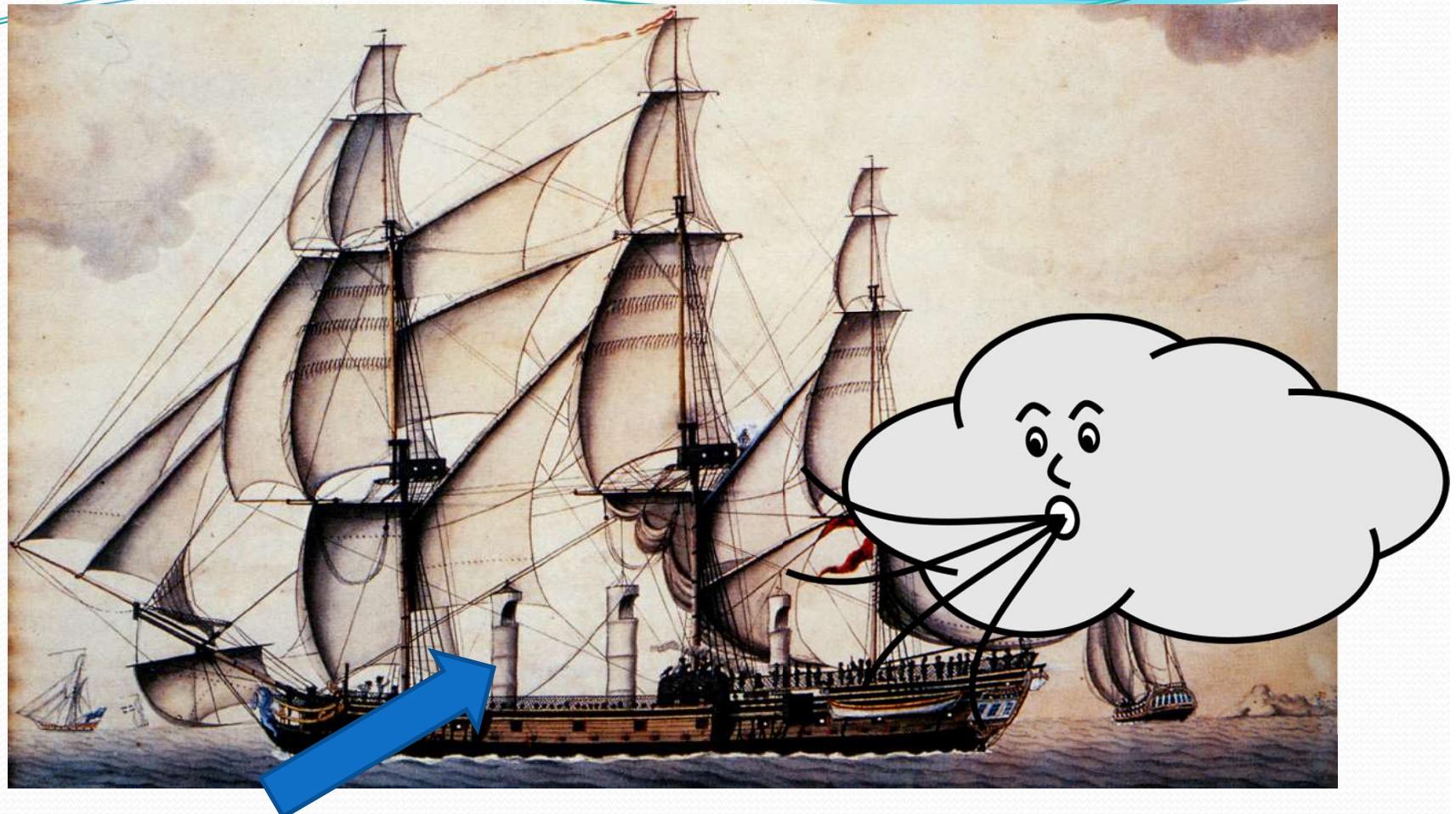
There are no bathrooms – just buckets placed on the floor



People lay on the bare deck timbers



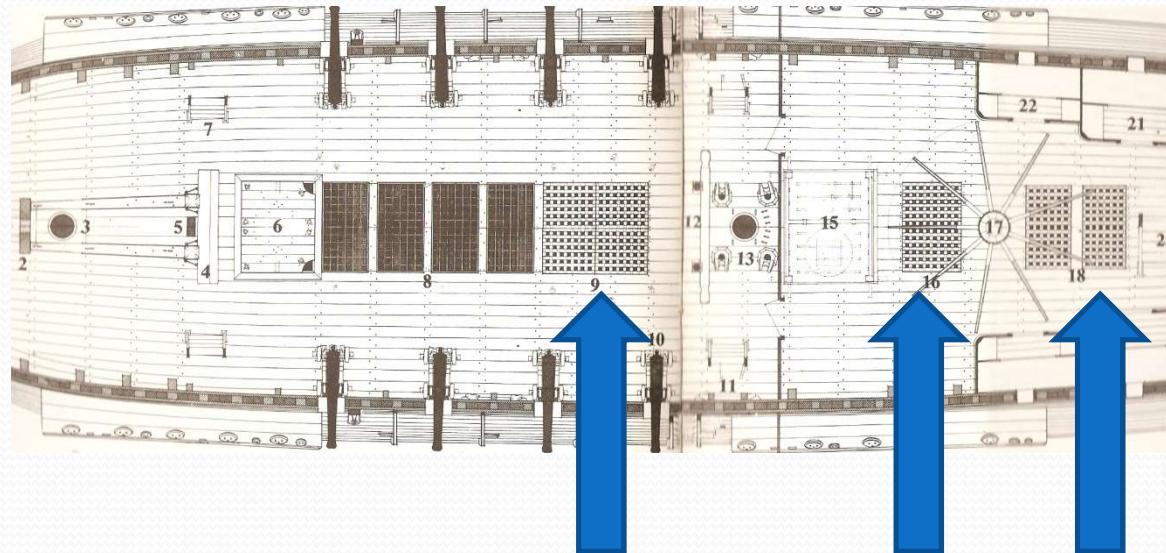
The captives spent a lot of time on the ‘slave deck’. Conditions down there were very crowded, very hot, and filthy



WINDSAIL – supposed to funnel air down to the ‘slave decks’ but did not work very well



GRATINGS
-hatchways with small holes: the only way on many ships that any air got down to the 'slave decks'

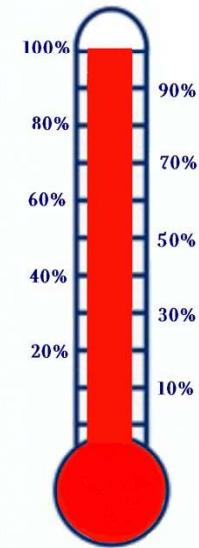


- Iron grating from the wreck of the *James Matthews*, a Portuguese slave shipwreck. The holes in the grating are only 57mm x 42mm.



THAT'S TINY !!!

How hot did it get?



What's
your
guess?

Thomas Trotter

Doctor on a slave ship, writing in 1792

The gratings are also half covered when it blows hard, to keep out the salt spray or rain.

The temperature in these apartments, when they became crowded, was sometimes above 96° on Fahrenheit's scale.

I, myself, could never breathe there, unless under the hatchway

That's 35.5°C – the hottest day in England last year was

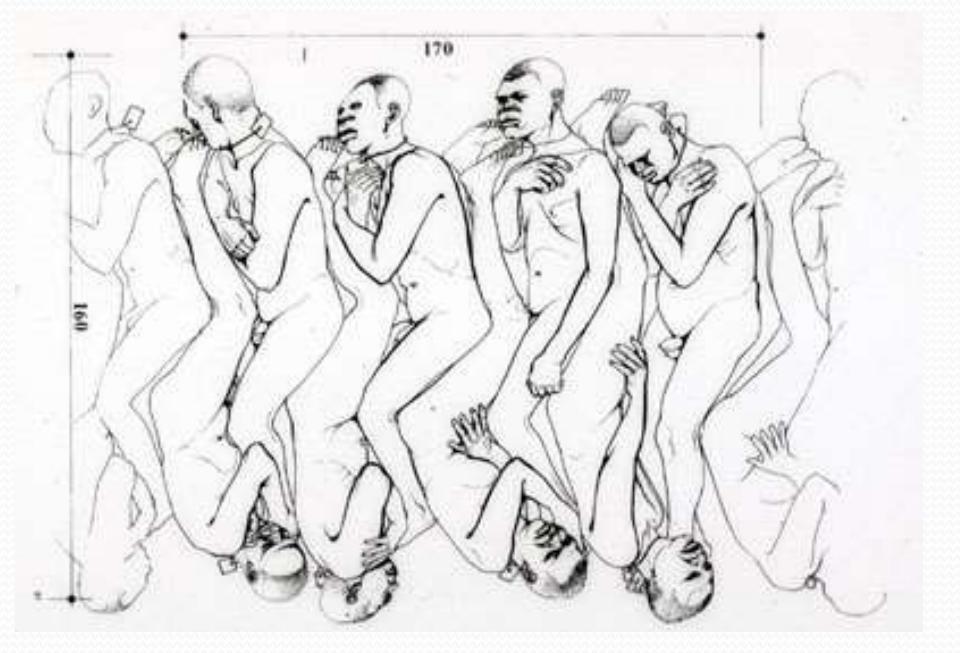
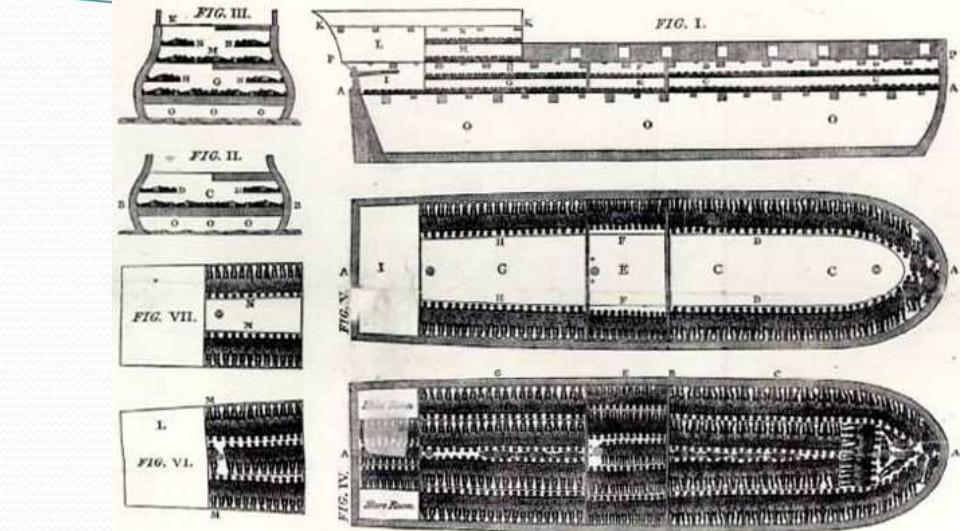
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DR. TROTTER
AGE: 57.

Space below decks

- Slaves on deck in the daytime – below deck at night and in bad weather
- Most adults made the journey into slavery lying in a space 177 cm x 37cm
- The width of this space was so small that slaves were laid head to toe ('spoonwise')



What have we found out?

- Underwater archaeology provides lots of information about:
- The appearance of slave ships
- The conditions on board them
- BUT.....
- It is really expensive to do...
- ..and it is really hard to locate ships successfully
- Archaeology needs to be used alongside documentary history to get the best understanding of slave ships